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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixtieth year

Identical letters dated 4 January 2005 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to use excessive, indiscriminate and lethal force against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation, causing more civilian deaths and trauma and constantly fueling the vicious cycle of violence and tensions. The occupying Power continues to commit such crimes in flagrant violation of international law, inflicting widespread suffering on the Palestinian population and perpetuating the humanitarian crisis and the instability that has prevailed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000.

Today, the Israeli occupying forces brutally killed at least seven Palestinian civilians, the majority of them children under the age of 18 years, and seriously wounded eight other people in an attack in the town of Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip. The occupying forces fired tank shells at a farming area of strawberry and potato fields, striking a group of farmers and children in the fields, many of whose body parts were blown to pieces by the force of the shelling. Of the seven Palestinians killed, six were members of the same family, the Ghabin family. The dead included three young brothers, Hani Mohammed Kamil Ghabin, age 17, Mahmoud Mohammed Kamil Ghabin, age 13, and Bassam Mohammed Kamil Ghabin, age 16, and three of their cousins, Rajeh Ghassan Kamil Ghabin, age 10, Jabir Adbullah Ghabin, age 16, and Mohammed Hassan Musa Ghabin, age 13. The massive devastation and loss inflicted upon this one family by the occupying Power is only one of the countless tragedies and inhumane collective punishments endured daily by the Palestinian people under Israel's cruel 37-year military occupation.

The attack on Beit Lahiya follows an assault by the Israeli occupying forces in the area of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip just five days ago. The occupying forces have repeatedly raided and attacked Khan Younis, leaving behind widespread destruction and rising numbers of casualties. Using unmanned drones and tanks, the occupying forces unleashed a deadly assault in Khan Younis on Thursday, 30 December 2004, that by day's end left nine Palestinians dead, including a 14-

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year-old boy, Mohammed Yahya Abu Al-Said, and a 20-year-old handicapped man, Ahmed Mohammed Touman. In addition, the occupying forces caused destruction to several homes and to property and infrastructure in the area.

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to unabatedly pursue all of its other illegal policies and practices throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the imposition of closures and restrictions on the movement of persons, including humanitarian personnel and the candidates campaigning for the Palestinian Authority presidential elections. The Israeli occupying forces continue to harass the candidates at checkpoints and roadblocks and to prevent their unhindered movement throughout the Palestinian Territory. In a tragic and violent incident in Rafah on Friday, 31 December 2004, a young Palestinian boy, Rizik Ziyad Muslih, age 15, was killed by Israeli gunfire from an observation tower in a nearby illegal settlement as he was hanging a poster for one of the presidential candidates.

In addition, Israel continues to pursue its illegal settlement and wall campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in blatant violation of and contemptuous disregard for international law, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, including resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004. In the past week, the intentions of the occupying Power to continue seizing Palestinian land and incorporating illegal settlements on the western side of the expansionist wall were revealed. A proposed revised route for the wall in the southern West Bank will encompass the illegal "Gush Etzion" settlement bloc and will result in the isolation of nearly 18,000 Palestinians on the western side of the wall, separating their four villages from the rest of the West Bank. These plans, in addition to the continuing confiscation of large tracts of land and the ongoing construction of the wall nearby in the Bethlehem area, will further sever the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian Territory and undoubtedly impose increased hardships on the Palestinian inhabitants of the area.

The international community must seriously address all of these ongoing violations and take the necessary measures to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to adhere to international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, and to respect all of its legal obligations. The international community cannot allow the occupying Power to continue to act with such flagrant impunity and disrespect for the law, while the defenseless Palestinian civilian population continues to suffer as a result of such brute force and illegal policies and practices.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 210 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 29 December 2004 (A/ES-10/291-S/2004/1028) constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

Accordingly, in follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my profound regret to inform you that, since my last letter to you six days ago, at least 22 more Palestinians, including 9 children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces,

raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 3,574. (The names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter.)

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations